

# The Softest Spot

by Meredith Byrne

I wasn't born into silence. It found me.  
Found the softest spot and settled,  
eminent domain.

I don't know who made the rules.  
I only know I learned them  
the way moss learns stone:  
slow,  
without asking,  
until I called them beliefs.

Some of them have names:  
Be grateful. Shut your mouth. Prove it.  
Don't cry if you want to be taken seriously.

Most don't. They sit under the skin,  
inked in with the groceries and the gaslight.  
With the grades and the grievances.  
Details I never could fathom,  
like how I smile when I really need  
to scream.

So I try.  
I try to release the rules. I really do.  
But they stick like blood. And I don't know  
how to stitch a wound that I didn't even know  
I'd sustained. Until it stains.

Can I release into peace without attending  
every injury?  
What if all this trying is a trap?  
And what if I already failed by believing I can  
be?

Yet hope hangs on, costly as a deadbeat lover.  
It insists on its ride in the sun, even though  
it knows damn well my wheels and I broke down,  
totaled at the last.